

Production No. 7F23

The Simpsons

"WHEN FLANDERS FAILED"

Written by

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Created by
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Developed by
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TABLE DRAFT

Date 10/31/90

FOR TABLE READ ONLY

"WHEN FLANDERS FAILED"

Cast List

HOMER.....DAN CASTELLANETA
MARGE.....YEARDLEY SMITH
BART.....NANCY CARTWRIGHT
LISA.....YEARDLEY SMITH
NED FLANDERS.....HARRY SHEARER
ROD FLANDERS.....PAMELA HAYDEN
TODD FLANDERS.....NANCY CARTWRIGHT
MAUDE FLANDERS.....MAGGIE ROSWELL
MR. BURNS.....HARRY SHEARER
SMITHERS.....HARRY SHEARER
AKIRA.....HANK AZARIA
BARNEY.....DAN CASTELLANETA
MOE.....HANK AZARIA
JIMBO.....PAMELA HAYDEN
DOLPH.....PAMELA HAYDEN
KEARNY.....NANCY CARTWRIGHT
ANNOUNCER.....DAN CASTELLANETA
SPORTSCASTER #1.....HANK AZARIA
SPORTSCASTER #2.....HARRY SHEARER
BOY.....PAMELA HAYDEN
GIRL.....PAMELA HAYDEN
NEIGHBORHOOD GUY.....DAN CASTELLANETA
BOSS.....HANK AZARIA

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WOMAN.....MAGGIE ROSWELL

VILLAIN.....HARRY SHEARER

MAN SHOPPER.....HANK AZARIA

SUPERVISOR.....HANK AZARIA

SECRETARY.....MAGGIE ROSWELL

MAN.....HANK AZARIA

COLLECTION AGENT.....HANK AZARIA

WIFE.....MAGGIE ROSWELL

"When Flanders Failed"

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ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. SIMPSON HOUSE - DAY

CLOSE UP - DYNO HOME-MADE LABEL

It reads "Property of Ned Flanders." We WIDEN to show HOMER trying to MOW his entire lawn with Flanders' electric weed whacker. The Simpsons' discarded push mower is abandoned in the background. FLANDERS walks over from his yard, carrying an envelope.

FLANDERS

(CHUCKLING) Why Homer, you silly
goose! The weed whacker's just for
the edges! You're going to be out
here all day!

HOMER

(TURNING OFF WHACKER) I'm almost
done.

We look around. No, he isn't.

FLANDERS

(GIGGLES) Oh, my! I'm sorry. You
are a picture! Here, let me get my
riding mower.

HOMER

I'm doing just fine on my own, thank
you. (MUTTERING) Lousy Monday
morning, armchair lawn care expert -- ✓

Homer STARTS up Flanders' weed whacker and resumes
whacking. Flanders gives him the envelope.

FLANDERS

Well -- hee hee! -- if you're
finished by tomorrow, come on over
and strap on the feed bag. We're
gonna fire up old Propane Elaine and
put the heat to the meat! Nummy nummy
num! (CHUCKLES)

HOMER

(CHUCKLES) Sounds great, sounds
great!

Flanders waves and strides away smiling. Homer stops
chuckling.

HOMER (CONT'D)

(MUTTERING) Stupid baby-talking,
glad-handling, party boy --

INT. SIMPSON HOUSE - KITCHEN - EVENING

MARGE and Homer are sitting at the table. LISA reads the
invitation. It has caricatures of Ned and Maude Flanders.

LISA

(READING) "The Flanders are having a
beef-a-thon! Incredible Ned-ibles!
Maude-acious vittles!".

MARGE

I think it means he's having a
barbecue.

HOMER

(EXASPERATED) Well, why doesn't he
just say so?

MARGE

He's trying to be friendly. You know,
if you gave Ned Flanders a chance, I
think you'd find he's a very sweet
guy --

HOMER

Oh, here we go again. Don't get me
started on Flanders. I don't care if
he's the nicest guy in the world,
he's a jerk. End of story. -✓

MARGE

Maybe if you talk to him at the
barbecue.

HOMER

You talk with him. I ain't goin'. As soon as we get there, he comes up, he shakes my hand and says, "How you doin'?" What he really means is "I'm doin' better than you." Then he just stands there all smiles, just twisting the knife, twisting the knife...

MARGE

(MURMURS) I know it's hard, Homer. Maybe he does have things a little nicer --

HOMER

Excuse me? Nicer? I wouldn't trade places with that guy if you paid me. Thanks a lot, Marge, you really put me in my place.

MARGE

Oh, Homer.

HOMER

Don't get me wrong, it's worth feeling three inches tall to find out what kind of a person you really are. Marge Simpson... President of the International We Love Flanders Fan ✓ Club...

MARGE

(FRUSTRATED MURMUR)

HOMER

(SINGING SCORNFULLY) We love you

Flanders, oh yes we do / We don't

love anyone, as much as you --

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FLANDERS HOUSE - DAY

Marge, carrying a covered dish, arrives at the barbecue with the children. Ned, wearing a "Hail to the Chef" apron, is cooking some burgers.

FLANDERS

Fee fi fo fum! I smell Marge

Simpson's potatoes au gratin! Mmmm- ✓

mmm!

MARGE

Hi, Ned. Homer sends his apologies,
but he, uh... (STRAINED) there was
some important work at the plant that
only he could take care of.

INT. SIMPSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Homer lies on the couch, watching the CFL draft on TV.
SANTA'S LITTLE HELPER lies on the floor.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

We now return you to the exciting
fifteenth round action at the
Canadian Football League draft.

SPORTSCASTER #1 (V.O.)

And so the Saskatchewan Rough
Riders, who scored only four
rouges all last season, get the
kicker they so sorely need.

SPORTSCASTER #2 (V.O.)

The next pick belongs to the
Ottawa Roughriders, who are
desperately in need of a new wide
oot. I understand they have
their eye on a number of washed-
up American stars.

HOMER

(MUTTERING)
Stupid Flanders...
always showing off.
Go ahead, Marge,
have a ball... What
if they came back,
and I was dead
from not eating?...
Serve them right...
They'd cry their
eyes out...

FLANDERS' YARD - CONTINUOUS

Flanders flips a couple of SIZZLING burgers. The wind blows
the smoke around.

INT. SIMPSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Homer is now asleep on the couch. We see a CLOSE UP of the
open window. The curtains are blown in by a breeze. Santa's
Little Helper starts to SNIFF. He stands up, JINGLING his
license tags. Homer rouses.

HOMER

What is it, boy? (SNIFFS) Mmmmmmmmm...
bar-b-que.

CLOSE UP - BURGER BEING TURNED ON A GRILL.

BACK TO SCENE

Santa's Little Helper has his paws up on a windowsill, his
tongue hanging out. We WIDEN and show Homer at the other
window, his tongue hanging out.

HOMER'S POV

We see Bart sitting by a stack of hamburgers, eating. The buns are too small for the juicy burgers. Bart turns and notices Homer at the window. He starts chewing slowly, savoring every bite. He rubs his belly with contentment.

INT. SIMPSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

We see Santa's Little Helper salivating madly. We WIDEN and see Homer salivating madly in the exact same position.

EXT. SIMPSON HOUSE - BACK DOOR

Santa's Little Helper scurries out the dog door just before the large door opens. Homer hurries out and walks quickly to Flanders' yard. He heads straight for the food table, elbowing people aside.

HOMER

(FAST) Hey, everyone, I'm back!

Great to see you! Nice to meet you!

Homer gets to the burgers and grabs a pile. He eats as he heads to a distant corner of the yard.

FLANDERS

(CALLING) Heya, Homer!

Homer, CHOMPING on a burger, waves and continues to a distant tree.

EXT. FLANDERS' YARD - A LITTLE LATER

Bart is "it" in a game of tag. He chases a boy, who touches the tree Homer is sitting under. Every time someone approaches, Homer covers his plate of burgers.

BOY

Base!

BART

Nice play.

Bart chases a girl, who grabs the boy's free hand while the boy is touching the tree.

BART (CONT'D)

(TAGGING HER) You're "it"!

GIRL

Electricity!

BART

No electricity. Electricity only in
freeze tag.

GIRL

Okay... (TAGS BART) Now you're "it"!

HOMER

No tagbacks.

BART

Yeah, you cheater!

GIRL

(TO BART) You lie like a fly with a
booger in its eye.

HOMER

Hee, hee... a fly with a booger in
its eye...

ON FLANDERS

Ned stands and addresses the group.

FLANDERS

Friends, we love you all, we're glad
to have you, but I also have a
(SLYLY) "sinister" motive for asking
you all here -- "sinister" being
Latin for "left-handed." (CHUCKLES)
But enough joking.

HOMER

That was a joke?

FLANDERS

As of Friday, I have taken early
retirement from my job.

Flanders holds up a tied necktie.

FLANDERS (CONT'D)

Here's the noose I had to wear for
ten years.

He throws it on the grill and it goes up in flames.

FLANDERS (CONT'D)

I'm opening a store in the
Springfield Mall: The Leftorium, the
everything store for left-handed
people.

MARGE

Ned, that's so wonderful. Your own
store?

FLANDERS

That's right. Li'l old shopkeeper me.

NEIGHBORHOOD GUY

So, how did your boss like losing his
best employee?

FLANDERS

Oh, I'm afraid I didn't handle it
very well...

RIPPLE DISSOLVE
TO:

FLANDERS' BOSS' OFFICE - DAY

Flanders' furious BOSS POUNDS his desk. On the wall we see
an "Employee of the Month" plaque with Flanders' name on
every month.

BOSS

Traitor! Twelve years of stellar
service, setting me up for this stab
in the back. You can forget about
that vacation pay!

FLANDERS

But sir, I gave you six months notice
and I trained my own successor --

BOSS

Get the hell out of here! You
disgust me!

FLANDERS

(BACKING OUT DOOR) I'm sorry! I'm
sorry!

RIPPLE DISSOLVE
BACK TO:

ON FLANDERS

He shakes his head.

FLANDERS (CONT'D)

Oh the things I said in that office!

I wish I could take them back.

FLANDERS' YARD - A LITTLE LATER

Lisa and several other GIRLS sing. Homer listens in, panicking every time they're about to swear.

GIRLS

(SINGING) Susie had a steamboat/ the	
steamboat had a bell/ Susie went to	HOMER
heaven/ the steamboat went to...Hell-o	Hey! Hey!
operator/ get me number nine/	(CHUCKLES) Oh you
if you disconnect me/ I'll kick you	girls!... Hey! I'm
in the... / <u>Behind</u> the refrigerator/	listening!
there was a piece of glass/ Susie sat	(CHUCKLES) Marge!
upon it/ it went right up her/ Ask me	Did you hear--ooh,
no more questions, tell me no more	got me again.
lies...	

FLANDERS' BACK YARD - A LITTLE LATER

FLANDERS

I'm gonna be my own boss, make my own
hours. And if one day I don't feel
like goin' in, I hang up the "Gone
Fishin'" sign in the window!

HOMER

Flanders, work is drudgery. It's in
the bible.

Clear

FLANDERS

Homer, drudgery is being a Southpaw
in a Northpaw world. I'm going to
change all that with my Leftorium.

HOMER

(MOCKING) You'll have lots of fun
working. You and all the Oompa
Loompas. Tra-la-la.

Maude brings Ned a wishbone.

MAUDE

Here, you two. Make a wish.

HOMER

Uh, nahh.

MAUDE

It's fun.

HOMER

No, it isn't.

FLANDERS

You must have something you want to
wish for, Homer.

HOMER

Let's see.

A THOUGHT BALLOON appears over Homer's head. In it appears
a newspaper with the headline "President Declares World
Peace."

HOMER (CONT'D)

Nah.

The newspaper is replaced with one whose headline reads "President Simpson Declares World Peace." There is a picture of Homer underneath.

HOMER (CONT'D)

Hmmm.

The headline changes to "President Simpson Wins Super Bowl". The photo shows Homer, in a top hat and tails, preparing to throw a forward pass. He smiles.

HOMER (CONT'D)

Heyyyy.

FLANDERS

Come on, Homer! I got an ambition to do some wishin'!

HOMER

(ANNOYED) Just for that, I'm changing my wish!

Homer looks annoyed, then gets an idea. The picture in the thought balloon turns to a picture of a penniless Flanders holding out his empty pockets.

HOMER (CONT'D)

Ooooh.

Homer smiles wider than before. The image changes to Flanders crying next to "Flanders' Stupid Left-Handed Shop". There is a sign reading "Going Out of Business" in the window.

HOMER (CONT'D)

(CHUCKLES)

Homer smiles wider. He imagines a tombstone with Flanders' name on it.

HOMER (CONT'D)

Mmmm -- too far.

He backs up to the image of Flanders CRYING.

HOMER (CONT'D)

(TO FLANDERS) Okay. Ready.

They BREAK the wishbone. Homer wins.

HOMER (CONT'D)

Yesssss! Oh yesssss! (SHOVING BONE IN
FLANDERS' FACE) Read it and weep,
loser!

MAUDE

What'd you wish for, Homer?

FLANDERS

No no, don't say. Otherwise it won't
come true.

HOMER

Oooh. That would be a shame.

Homer takes a big bite out of his burger, then CHUCKLES.
The laugh grows louder until his mouth is wide open,
showing a lot of chewed-up food. Maude and Ned turn away
politely. Homer starts to CHOKe on the food. Ned pats
Homer on the back.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. SIMPSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Bart is sitting on the couch, eating a bag of chips.

ON TV

is an ITCHY and SCRATCHY cartoon titled, "O Solo Meow." Scratchy is at a table in a restaurant. Itchy, the waiter, brings him a big plate of spaghetti with a suspiciously large meatball. Scratchy gobbles down the entire plateful in one gulp. As he SUCKS in the ends of the noodles, he sees that one strand is a BURNING bomb fuse which disappears inside his mouth before he can grab it. He runs around in panic, then CRASHES through the door. He leaves a perfect outline of his running torso; his head, however, catches the door jam, is sheared off and bounces back into the room. Through the hole in the door, we see the decapitated body take a few lurching steps, collapse, and EXPLODE. A WAITER carrying a big tray enters the room and slips on Scratchy's head and falls. Itchy LAUGHS and LAUGHS.

BART

(LAUGHS)

Marge looks at Bart laughing and eating. His belly shakes like gelatin.

MARGE

Bart, how many hours a day do you
watch TV?

BART

Six. Seven if there's something good
on.

MARGE

Don't you think you should get more
exercise?

BART

Yeah, but what are ya gonna do?

HOMER

Marge, TV gives so much and asks so
little. It's a boy's best friend.

MARGE

That's the problem, Homer. Even as
we speak, millions of children are
staring at the TV instead of getting
some much-needed exercise. Those
children's parents should be ashamed
of themselves.

On TV, a GONG sounds. A commercial comes on. Two MEN in
karate ghis are chopping at each other with their hands,
kicking and WHOOPING. MUSIC: "Kung Fu Fighting". The
narrator is AKIRA, the waiter from The Happy Sumo.

AKIRA (V.O.)

This is karate.

BART

Cool!

The image changes to the same men fighting with nunchucks.
The music changes.

AKIRA (V.O.)

But this is also karate.

BART

Cool!

Akira stands in a karate classroom wearing a ghi.

AKIRA (V.O.)

Millions have come to know discipline
and self-confidence through karate.
Who are they? They are community
leaders, they are homemakers, they
are Supreme Court justices.

A SALESMAN, a HOUSEWIFE and a JUSTICE in black robe, join him.

AKIRA (CONT'D)

They are people like you and me. Come
to know karate. HA!

His kick fills the screen, which cuts to a title card:
"Springfield Martial Arts Academy, Springfield Mall. Next
to Shakespeare's Fried Chicken."

BART

Hey Mom, how 'bout if I learn karate?
Will that make you happy?

MARGE

That sounds fine, Bart.

HOMER

See, Marge? You knock TV and then it
helps you out. I think you owe
somebody a little apology.

He points to the television.

MARGE

(MURMURS)

INT. SPRINGFIELD MALL - NEXT DAY

Homer and Bart walk up to the karate school. Two MEN are fighting in the window. Homer hands Bart a ten-dollar bill, and Bart goes inside. Homer continues down to Flanders' store: "The Leftorium: Everything for the left-handed man, woman and child." Homer goes inside.

INT. STORE

In the corner is a sports car. The sign over it reads "Left-handed gear shift -- only three ever made." Everything else in the store is very small and cheap: scissors, can openers, corkscrews, rulers. On the wall are t-shirts, barbecue aprons, bumper stickers and posters with slogans like "Kiss Me, I'm Left-handed", "I Brake for Lefties", "Lefties 'Do It' Right", etc. The store is nearly deserted. Homer approaches Flanders at the left-handed cash register.

HOMER 

Hey Flanders, how's business?

FLANDERS

A little pokey, but things will pick up.

Nearby, a WOMAN BREAKS a mug which bears the slogan, "It Takes Three Rights To Make A Left."

WOMAN

I am so sorry. How much do I owe you?

FLANDERS

You put that money away. That was an accident.

WOMAN

Really? Well, thanks very much. Can you validate my parking?

FLANDERS

Absotively posilutely.

He STAMPS her parking ticket. She leaves.

HOMER

Hey, Flanders. What do I have to
break to get my parking validated?

Hee hee.

INT. KARATE SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Bart and several BOYS about his age sit on the floor, wearing karate ghis with white belts. Akira enters and begins passing out books.

AKIRA

Greetings. I am Akira, your guide on
the path to true karate. And this is
our map, the Art of War by Sun Tzu.
It will teach us our most important
lesson: we learn karate so that we
need never use it.

Bart stands up.

BART

Excuse me, sir. I already know how
not to hit a guy. Can we break out
the nunchucks?

AKIRA

(CHUCKLES) Ah, the impetuosity of
youth! For now, let us read.

Bart stands again.

BART

Akira, my good man. When do we break
blocks of ice with our heads?

AKIRA

First you must fill your head with wisdom. Then you can hit ice with it.

BART

Excuse me, sensei, can I go to the bathroom?

AKIRA

You can, if you believe you can.

EXT. KARATE SCHOOL

Bart exits, putting his jacket over his ghi.

BART

Paying money to read books... the hell with this.

Bart approaches the Springfield Dodecaplex cinemas in the mall and reads the marquee. The twelfth movie advertised is "Temple of A Thousand Fists". He goes inside.

INT. MOVIE THEATER

There are only six seats in the tiny theater. Bart is the only one watching.

ON SCREEN

Two NINJAS WHOOP and YIP as they fight at blinding speed through a warehouse. Finally, at the edge of the second level near a winch rope, the VILLAIN knocks the HERO down. He gives an evil triumphant CHUCKLE and walks forward with his first and third fingers extended.

VILLAIN

And now, the touch that brings death.

The hero pulls out a ninja star. The villain stops with a surprised GRUNT, backing up. The hero throws the star. The villain dodges it, not noticing that the star hits a control panel.

VILLAIN (CONT'D)

(POINTING) Ha ha ha ha ha ha. (LOOKS
DOWN) Huh?

He sees that his foot is caught in the winch rope. It pulls him up to the ceiling and over a pulley.

VILLAIN (CONT'D)

Iiiiiiiiiiii!

ON BART

As he watches, enraptured, he stuffs his face with snack treats.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SIMPSON HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The family is at the table eating dinner.

MARGE

So Bart, what did you learn in karate school today?

BART

I learned the (OMINOUSLY) touch that brings death. Permit me to demonstrate. Lisa, shut your eyes. Soon you will be at peace.

Bart pushes two fingers toward Lisa.

LISA

(SCARED) Quit it, Bart. Quit it!
M-o-o-o-m!

MARGE

Bart, don't use the touch of death on your sister.

HOMER

I learned something today, too.
Flanders isn't just a jerk, he's a
failure. (CHUCKLES) I'm his best
customer, and I just came in to laugh
at him.

MARGE

Oh, Homer. Stop it!

HOMER

Hey, don't blame the messenger,
Marge.

LISA

Dad, do you know what Schadenfreude
is?

HOMER

Now Lisa, you know the answer to
that. *Now of course not* (SIGHS) All right: No, I do
not know what Schadenfreude is.
Please tell me, because I don't know.

LISA

It's the German term for "shameful
joy" -- taking pleasure in the
suffering of others.

HOMER

Oh Lisa, it's only natural. It's like when there's a flood, or a tornado, or a Martian comes down and grabs a guy -- your first reaction is, "better him than me."

LISA

But Mr. Flanders is our neighbor and our friend.

HOMER

Yeah, but usually he's being promoted to some glorified paper-pushing job, or getting a community service medal for blowing some old lady's nose. And I feel like... What's the opposite of that shameful joy thing of yours?

LISA

Sour grapes.

HOMER

Boy, the Germans have a word for everything.

mild

INT. SPRINGFIELD MALL - EARLY EVENING

CLOSE-UP - ITCHY & SCRATCHY CREDITS

Pull out to reveal the TV is one of many in a bank of sets in a department store. Bart is sitting on a couch with a price tag on it, eating a bag of chips. He checks his watch.

BART

Uh-oh.

He gets up and runs out of the department store to the Karate store, stopping at a water fountain to splash his face so it appears he's been sweating. Bart gets to the Karate store just as Homer turns the corner.

HOMER

Hey, boy. How was class?

BART

Today we learned how to rip a man's heart out and show it to him before he dies.

HOMER

That'll learn 'im.

They walk towards Flanders' store.

EXT. FLANDERS' STORE - CONTINUOUS

The store, again, is nearly empty. DOLPH, JIMBO and KEARNY, with stuffed pockets are just leaving.

JIMBO

What did you swipe?

DOLPH

An "I Love Lefties" tumbler.

KEARNY

Pinking shears.

JIMBO

(DISGUSTED) Pinking shears? Let's go to the Food Court and steal some baked potatoes.

They toss their stuff on the ground as Homer and Bart enter the store. Homer approaches the counter.

HOMER

Hey Flanders, when are your busy hours?

FLANDERS

Oh, I expect things to start picking up soon. I think word of mouth is starting to spread.

A MAN SHOPPER comes in the store.

MAN SHOPPER

Hey, I hear you validate parking tickets without purchase.

FLANDERS

Right as rain. Or, as we say here, left as rain. (CHUCKLES)

MAN SHOPPER

Just stamp the ticket.

Ned STAMPS the ticket and the man leaves.

INT. MOE'S TAVERN - NIGHT

Moe is struggling to open a bottle of wine.

BARNEY

Hey Homer, how's your neighbor's store doing?

HOMER

Lousy. He just sits there all day. He'd have a great job if he didn't own the place.

MOE

(STRUGGLING WITH CORKSCREW) Lousy
right-handed corkscrews! What does
he sell?

HOMER

Well actually, Moe...

Over Homer's head a dream cloud appears. Flanders is
standing next to the "going out of business" sign. Homer
smiles.

HOMER (CONT'D)

I dunno.

INT. SIMPSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Bart and Lisa are sitting on the couch watching TV.

BART

Hey, Lis. Change the channel.

LISA

You change it.

Bart makes a Bruce Lee-type chicken NOISE as he tenses his
karate hand.

LISA (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

BART-

I'm picturing you flying through the
air and flopping in the corner like a
rag doll.

Lisa runs to the TV and changes the channel. She returns
to the couch. After a beat.

BART (CONT'D)

I grow weary of this new channel.

Change it back.

INT. NUCLEAR POWER PLANT - DAY

Homer examines a rotating automatic dispenser labeled "Dessert-O-Mat". He pushes the button so the display rotates. All of the slots are empty except for the apples.

HOMER

Apples, apples, apples... Come on,
candy bar. (MAD) Hey, I recognize
that apple! That sinks it. I'm
really gonna let 'em have it this
time!

He storms over to the suggestion box, writes, "No more
apples in the vending machine, please" on a piece of paper,
and drops it in the box. A SUPERVISOR wanders by and points
to Homer.

SUPERVISOR

Hey, Simpson. Run that suggestion box
up to Mr. Burns' office.

HOMER

(TERRIFIED) Oh, my God! I'm dead!

INT. POWER PLANT - OUTSIDE BURNS' OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Homer has his hand jammed in the box. He jiggles the lock,
but it won't open. He SLAMS the box on the desk.

SECRETARY

(INTO INTERCOM) The suggestion box
is here, sir.

INT. NUCLEAR POWER PLANT - BURNS' OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Mr. Burns has a white cat in his lap. He is trying to open a can of cat food, with little success. He GRUNTS and WHEEZES. Smithers looks concerned. Homer enters sheepishly, carrying the suggestion box.

BURNS

(GENIAL) Ah! Look, Smithers, another member of our nuclear family, with some helpful suggestions. And what's your name?

HOMER

Homer Simpson, sir.

BURNS

(SMILING) I'm Monty Burns.

Homer puts the suggestion box on Burns' desk. Burns turns it over. Only two pieces of paper come out. Burns picks one up.

BURNS (CONT'D)

Hm. (READING) "Keep that handsome owner out of sight. He's distracting the female employees." (POINTING PLAYFULLY) Smithers... (CHUCKLES)

SMITHERS

Got me, sir. (CHUCKLES)

Burns picks up the other suggestion.

BURNS

Oh! It's a real one! (READING) "No more apples in the vending machine, please." (CHUCKLES) Well, that's almost a sentence!

Burns and Smithers share a CHUCKLE. Homer looks embarrassed.

BURNS (CONT'D)

You know, Smithers, it never ceases
to amuse me, the banality which
occupies the common worker. What's on
his mind? Eat. Sleep. Procreate.
Every time I try to think of them as
humans, they themselves point out my
folly.

HOMER

Can I leave, Mr. Burns?

BURNS

Oh, of course. And don't worry, (AS
IF TO A CHILD) there'll be plenty of
apples for you. Nobody will take away
your precious apples.

HOMER

(PUZZLED) But the note was asking you
to --

BURNS

Now, now. Tell my secretary that I
said you could have a free apple.
She'll make everything all right, I
promise.

Burns CHUCKLES as Homer starts to walk out, then resumes
struggling with the can. More GRUNTS.

BURNS (CONT'D)

Oh, my strength fails me. Damned
infernal gizmo! My kingdom for a
left-handed can opener!

Homer stops when he hears this. He starts to say something,
then stops himself. A dream cloud appears above his head
with Flanders standing next to the "going out of business"
sign.

FLANDERS

Come on, Homer. Tell him about the
store. I'm dyin' out here.

HOMER

Sorry, Flanders.

Homer exits, shutting the door behind him.

EXT. STREET - FLANDERS' HOUSE

Homer drives by and sees a sign on Flanders lawn saying,
"Garage Sale". The lawn is filled with the Flanders'
possessions.

HOMER

Huh?

Homer stops the car and gets out. A MAN is looking at
Ned's camcorder.

FLANDERS

(TO MAN) Are you sure you're not
interested? Two hundred dollars is
only the posted price.

MAN

Sorry, Ned.

The man turns and walks away.

FLANDERS

(CALLING AFTER HIM) Hey, I'm
flexible! You don't have to pay all
at once. (PATHETIC) I'll be here
all night if you change your mind.

Homer walks up.

HOMER

Hey, Flanders. Is everything okay?

FLANDERS

(COVERING) Oh, yeah. Thought I'd
get rid of some of the clutter. See
anything you like?

HOMER

(MAD) Oh, I get it. It's good
enough for me, but not good enough
for you! Well, I wouldn't be caught
dead buying this... Hello!

Homer looks enviously at a gas grill.

FLANDERS

Ooh, got your eye on the gas grill.
She's a butane beaut.

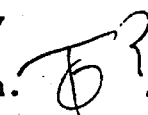
HOMER

I'll give you twenty bucks for it.

FLANDERS

Twenty? Homer, I paid three hundred
dollars for this just last year.

HOMER

You were swindled, my friend. Twenty
bucks. That's two zero. Not seventeen. 

FLANDERS

Homer, be reasonable.

Homer starts to walk away.

HOMER

No, no, I'm wasting your time.

(VENOMOUS BABY TALK) Bye bye! Homer
go bye bye now! Homer take big wallet
and go home! No cash for Neddie!
Homer keep all money! Say bye bye
wallet! Bye bye! Bye bye!

FLANDERS

We can talk...

HOMER

Bye bye! Bye bye!

FLANDERS

(SIGHS) All right, Homer.

HOMER

Twenty dollars?

FLANDERS

Twenty dollars.

HOMER

(THINKS IT OVER) Now I don't want it.

FLANDERS

(FRANTIC) What?

HOMER

I changed my mind. It was a passing fancy. Although perhaps if you threw in a few lawn chairs, maybe that tool bench, it might rekindle my interest.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SIMPSON HOUSE - BACKYARD - LATER

Bart and Homer have Flanders' hi-fi set up in the yard and are PLAYING one of Flanders' big band records. Homer, wearing a "Ned Loves Maude" t-shirt, is fiddling with the gas grill, trying to cook a steak. Bart is lying on Flanders' couch wearing a "Maude Loves Ned" t-shirt. Santa's Little Helper looks on.

HOMER

(FLANDERS IMITATION) Hey, Bartle-
eebooby, care for a steaker-a-bonga?

BART

Undubi-didubi-didubly, dear old
Daddles-arooney.

They CHUCKLE.

BART (CONT'D)

You really got all this stuff for
seventy-five bucks?

HOMER

Yup. He took all reasonable offers,
all unreasonable offers, and he gave
me this thing for free.

Homer holds up a ship in a bottle. He tosses it to Santa's Little Helper.

HOMER (CONT'D)

Here boy. Fetch.

There is a CRASH O.S. Then we hear the HISS of gas escaping as Homer CLICKS the "light" button on the grill.

HOMER (CONT'D)

Stupid dials... cheap five-dollar

grill... come on... (WAVING HAND

UNDER NOSE) P.U.!

Homer closes the cover and resumes pushing the light button. A second later, an EXPLOSION blows the cover off. Homer is splattered with steak bits.

HOMER (CONT'D)

(ANNOYED GRUNT)

BART

Good one, Dad.

Bart tries on an old horn-rimmed pair of Flanders' glasses. From his POV we see two fuzzy objects approach. Bart removes the glasses and the images come into focus: Marge and Lisa.

MARGE

Homer, this is the Flanders' entire living room set. How much did you pay for this?

HOMER

It's hard to give an exact number, but let's just say it was in excess of three-quarters of a hundred dollars.

MARGE

Seventy-five dollars? Ned must be desperate to settle for so little.

HOMER

Don't look at me. I gave him all I had.

Lisa looks over the purchases and turns to Bart.

LISA

I'm sure you did nothing to discourage this, you scavenger of human misery.

BART

Hey, keep your hands off my china hutch.

MARGE

Homer, either you pay a decent price for these things or you return them!

HOMER

Honey, honey, let's sit down and talk about it... on our new four dollar couch! (SUDDEN THOUGHT) Ooh! Wait a minute.

Homer takes the cushions off the couch and sticks his hands down the cracks. He produces handfuls of change.

HOMER (CONT'D)

Woo woo! It pays for itself!

INT. SIMPSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Homer is sitting on the couch watching a videotape of the Flanders' vacation. We see the Flanders family standing in front of the Grand Canyon, waving. There's a KNOCK at the door. Homer answers it, revealing a MAN.

COLLECTION AGENT

Good afternoon, sir, I'm Chuck Ellis from the Springfield Collection Agency, and I'm here to ask why you don't think you need to pay your bills.

HOMER

(DISTRAUGHT) Oh, I know I need to pay them. But there's just so many.

COLLECTION AGENT

Does it make you feel good about yourself to owe people money?
(STERNLY) We've been very patient with you, Mr. Flanders.

HOMER

I'm Homer Simpson. Ned Flanders lives over there.

COLLECTION AGENT

Oh. (FRIENDLY) Well, have a nice day, Mr. Simpson.

HOMER

You too. (GASP OF REALIZATION)
Flanders is in debt! Oh, the poor guy...

Homer sadly dabs his eye with a monogrammed "NF" handkerchief.

HOMER (CONT'D)

Are you sure?

COLLECTION AGENT

We don't make mistakes.

The agent takes out a ledger and writes uncomfortably in it. He is left-handed.

COLLECTION AGENT (CONT'D)

Damn right-handed ledgers... can't
write in these things...

HOMER

Uh, there's a place where...

COLLECTION AGENT

(LOOKING AT LEDGER) Hey, you said
you're Homer Simpson?

HOMER

Yeah.

COLLECTION AGENT

See you on Thursday.

HOMER

(ANNOYED GRUNT)

INT. SPRINGFIELD MALL - NEXT DAY

Homer gives Bart his ten dollars.

HOMER

Knock 'em dead, boy!

Bart runs off. Homer sneaks up to the corner near Flanders' store and peeks around. He GASPS.

HOMER'S POV

Flanders is padlocking the door to his store. A sign in the window reads "Going Out Of Business". Flanders is weeping. It is exactly like Homer's wish. Homer looks stunned.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. SPRINGFIELD ELEMENTARY - PLAYGROUND - LUNCH TIME

Lisa is PLAYING her saxophone in the school yard. DOLPH, KEARNY and JIMBO approach.

KEARNY

Hey, check out the saxophone!

Jimbo grabs the saxophone with Lisa still holding on to it.

DOLPH

Pretty boss, but there's something
stuck on it.

Dolph pushes Lisa's hands off it and starts to PLAY it badly.

DOLPH (CONT'D)

Hey, look at me -- I'm Elvis.

LISA

(MAD) That's mine! Give it back!

DOLPH

(HOLDING OUT SAX) If you want it,
just take it.

As Lisa reaches for it, Dolph pulls it out of her reach.
The boys LAUGH.

DOLPH (CONT'D)

Just kidding, here you go.

Dolph extends the saxophone to Lisa, but as she reaches for it, he pulls it away. The boys LAUGH again.

DOLPH (CONT'D)

Okay. We're sorry. This time we're
really going to give it to you.

Dolph holds the saxophone out and when Lisa reaches for it,
he tosses it to Jimbo, who tosses it to Kearny. They LAUGH
as Lisa starts to CRY. Bart approaches.

BART

Hey Lis, something wrong?

LISA

Not any more. (TO BULLIES) You
punks are about to get a taste of
your own medicine. This is my
brother... (SMUGLY) and he knows
Karate.

BART

Uh oh.

DOLPH

Oh, we're real scared.

KEARNY

(FAKE FEAR) Please don't hurt us,
Bart!

JIMBO

What are you gonna do, throw your
diapers at us?

The boys LAUGH derisively. Bart MOANS.

LISA

Just keep laughing, it only makes him madder. Come on, Bart, start them off with the touch of death and go from there.

BART

I think they've learned their lesson already, Lis.

DOLPH

No, we want to see the touch of death.

KEARNY

Yeah, come on Karate kid. Waste me!

Bart nervously approaches the bullies with his fingers extended.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SPRINGFIELD ELEMENTARY - PLAYGROUND - A LITTLE LATER

Bart dangles helplessly from the basketball hoop, his underwear "wedgied" around the rim. PAN DOWN to see Lisa beneath the hoop, looking up.

LISA

It's funny how two wrongs sometimes make a right.

EXT. SIMPSON HOUSE - NIGHT

Homer walks over to Flanders' house, wheeling the gas grill. He goes to the front door and sees a sign on the front door reading "NO TRESPASSING - SEIZED PROPERTY".

FLANDERS (O.S.)

Homer! Over here!

Homer looks toward the street and sees the Flanderses in the family car, where they have apparently set up housekeeping. The "Welcome to Flanders Country" doormat is outside the car door. Maude has hung a "God Bless Our Happy Car" needlepoint from the rearview window. Todd and Rod toast marshmallows over the cigarette lighter.

HOMER

(AWKWARD) Flanders, I, uh, wanted to give you your stuff back.

FLANDERS

Well, there's no house to put it in, not since that nice fellow from the bank, who was only doing his job, came and locked it up. And we'll need the money for gasoline.

HOMER

(POINTING) You're gonna live in your car?

FLANDERS

No, it's just a little campout tonight, then off to my sister's in Capital City. (TOWARDS CAR) What do think, kids? The big city!

TODD/ROD

Yay!

FLANDERS

I just thank the Lord I bought this station wagon instead of the sporty model I had my eye on. Yes sirree Bob, the old Flanders luck is holding out!

Homer looks puzzled.

FLANDERS (CONT'D)

Say, Todd, I want to talk to your Uncle Homer. You're head of the car till I get back.

Ned and Homer move away from the car. The family starts to sing.

TODD/ROD/MAUDE

Gray skies are gonna clear up / Put on a happy face / Wipe off that frown and cheer up / Put on a happy face...

FLANDERS

Listen to that singing... those poor fools. (SOBBING) Homer, I'm ruined.

HOMER

(UPSET) You are?

FLANDERS

Yep. You know, at times like these, I used to turn to the good book and find solace. But even the good book can't help me now.

HOMER

Why not?

FLANDERS

I sold it to you for seven cents.
You know, ever since that barbecue,
nothing's gone right. It's like
there's been a curse on me.

HOMER

(SOBBING) Oh, it's all my fault.

FLANDERS

No it's not. You tried to warn me
about gambling my family's future on
some pig in a poke... Homer, you were
a true friend.

Homer and Ned CRY together, then Homer gets an inspiration.

HOMER

Listen, Flanders, do you still have
that store?

FLANDERS

For two more days. Then it becomes
Libertarian Party headquarters. I
hope they have better luck than I
did.

HOMER

Flanders, you open that store
tomorrow!

FLANDERS

Aw, Homer, there's no point...

HOMER

I SAID DO IT!

He runs into the house.

INT. SIMPSON HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Marge watches as Homer strides purposefully to the phone.

MARGE

Homer, what are we going to do?

HOMER

(DIALING) Leave it to me, Marge.

I'm calling in all my markers.

(INTO PHONE) Hello, Jerry? Homer

Simpson. Remember last month, when

I paid back that loan? Well, now I

need you to do a favor for me.

MONTAGE

of people talking on the phone to Homer.

A. Moe's tavern. Moe is on the phone.

MOE

A left-handed corkscrew? Oh, baby!

Homer, if that's true, you're getting

a bottle of my finest Champale.

B. Barney's apartment. Barney is lying on his dining room table as he talks on the phone.

BARNEY

"Kiss Me, I'm Left-Handed"? (LAUGHS

HYSTERICALLY) That's a classic!

LAUGHING, he rolls off the table and HITS the floor.

C. A neighborhood living room. The neighborhood guy is lying on his couch when his wife comes in.

WIFE

Homer Simpson's on the phone.

NEIGHBORHOOD GUY

Tell him I went out.

WIFE

He needs you to help Ned Flanders.

NEIGHBORHOOD GUY

(JUMPING UP) Ned Flanders is in
trouble!?

INT. BURNS' OFFICE - DAY

Burns sits behind his desk struggling with another can of cat food. An anonymous WORKER places the suggestion box in front of him.

BURNS

(WEAKLY) Smithers, I'm licked. You
open this can.

SMITHERS

Okay, but you softened it up for me,
sir.

Burns takes out a suggestion, and his eyes grow wide.

BURNS

(EXCITED) Hold it, Smithers! I'll
open the can!

SMITHERS

But sir, how?

BURNS

To the mall! I'll explain on the
way!

INT. SPRINGFIELD MALL - DAY

Flanders wearily gets on the up escalator. He looks up and sees Todd and Rod looking down at him. Maude sticks her head over the railing.

MAUDE

Hurry, Ned, hurry! It's a miracle!

Flanders runs up the escalator. When he gets to the top, he finds that his store is packed with customers. Maude is back at the cash register, ringing up sales as fast as she can. The customers, including people we saw on the phone with Homer, talk to Maude as they carry their merchandise away.

CUSTOMERS

That Homer Simpson sure knows a good
thing when he sees one... Sharp guy,
that Homer... When Homer Simpson
calls at six in the morning, you know
it's important...

ON MR. BURNS

He is in a corner of the store, trying a left-handed can opener. The can is opening steadily, if slowly. Smithers looks on proudly. Mr. Burns' eyes are filled with a hateful joy.

BURNS

(TO CAN) Ahh, the worm has turned,
has it not, my tin-plated friend?
Look at you -- you, who were once so
proud -- now yielding and laid open
for my consumption. Feel the wrath of
the left hand of Burns!

PAN to see Moe easily opening a bottle of port with a left-handed corkscrew.

MOE

My life begins today!

In another area of the store, we see Barney wearing his "Kiss Me, I'm Left-handed" t-shirt. Two BEAUTIFUL WOMEN kiss him on each cheek.

BARNEY

What an icebreaker!

At the cash register, Flanders is now ringing up sales. Burns places two can openers on the counter.

BURNS

Put these on my charge-a-plate. (TO
SMITHERS) The boys at the Diners Club
will think I've gone quite mad. (TO
FLANDERS, AN AFTERTHOUGHT) Oh, and
that roadster in the corner as well.

There are GASPS from the shoppers. Maude puts her hand over her gaping mouth.

FLANDERS

Yes, sir! (HOLDS UP CAN OPENERS) They
make great presents, don't they?

BURNS

Well, they're both for me, but...
would you mind... (BLUSHING,
EMBARRASSED SMILE) gift wrapping
them, anyway?

FLANDERS

Not one eencey-weencey bit.

BURNS

You've made me very happy.

FLANDERS

And you me, sir.

BURNS

Ah! At last, a man who knows his
grammar! Huzzah for the shopkeep!

The crowd cries "HUZZAH!" Todd Flanders picks up a left-
handed guitar and starts singing. The shoppers join in.

SHOPPERS

(SINGING) Grey skies are gonna clear
up / Put on a happy face / Wipe off
that frown and cheer up / Put on a
happy face...

The collection agent enters. The shoppers stop singing.

COLLECTION AGENT

Mr. Flanders, I'm from the
Springfield collection agency, and
I'd like to know...

He looks around at the activity in the store. He rips a
page out of his ledger, tears it up and throws it away. He
notices a display of left-handed notebooks.

COLLECTION AGENT (CONT'D)

Hey! Nifty!

Homer works his way through the crowd, exchanging HELLOS with the people he called. He reaches the counter, puts down a twenty-dollar bill, and uses a left-handed corkscrew to open some left-handed wine.

FLANDERS

Homer, affordable tract housing made
us neighbors. But you made us
friends.

Homer toasts Flanders.

HOMER

To Ned Flanders... the richest left-
handed man in town.

They both drink out of the bottle. The shoppers resume singing.

SHOPPERS

(SINGING) Wipe away that full of
doubt look / Stick out that noble
chin / Try on a pleasant outlook /
Slap on a happy grin / And spread
sunshine all over the place / So put
on a happy face!



FADE OUT:

THE END